

**- Bill Begins Plans for 2-Hour High-Speed Rail Between NY and DC -**

**- Bill Would Increase Capacity, Efficiency in Northeast Lines -** *Washington, D.C.* – U.S. Representative John Hall (D-NY19) today announced passage of H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act. The bill authorizes over \$14 billion for Amtrak to make physical improvements to its rail services, fund new capital grants for states to provide new or improved intercity passenger rail, and calls for plans for a two-hour high-speed rail service between New York City and Washington D.C. Congressman Hall, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, co-sponsored the bill which passed the House by a vote of 311-104. The Senate has voted on similar legislation, so the bill will next be considered by a House-Senate conference committee.

Passenger rail plays a significant role in meeting the Hudson Valley's transportation needs. New York's 19th Congressional District is served by the Adirondack, Empire, Ethan Allen, and Lakeshore Limited Amtrak lines. In 2006, 37,908 passengers passed through the Croton-on-Hudson Amtrak station in Westchester County, averaging 189 miles per trip. Another 57, 440 used the Poughkeepsie station in Dutchess County.

"Passenger rail lowers American fuel consumption because it uses 21 percent less energy per passenger mile than cars. Supporting enhanced rail services in New York and throughout the country doesn't just make good economic sense during today's energy crisis; it's the smart choice for an energy-independent future," said Hall.

Amtrak is a long-distance and commuter rail network serving the Hudson Valley, New York and the Northeast. The bill opens the possibility of much faster travel in the Northeast Corridor. It directs the Secretary of Transportation to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the financing, design, construction, and operation of a two-hour high-speed rail system operating between New York City and Washington, D.C. The bill would increase Amtrak's capital grants, authorizing \$4.2 billion over five years to bring the Northeast Corridor into good repair. This increase in capital grants will allow Amtrak to purchase new rolling stock, rehabilitate existing bridges, and make improvements and maintenance repairs over its entire network. This funding will increase Amtrak's service and efficiency in the Hudson Valley.

The bill would also create a new State Capital Grant program for other inter-city passenger rail projects. It authorizes \$2.5 billion over five years for grants to states to pay for the capital costs of facilities and equipment necessary to provide new or improved inter-city passenger rail. The federal share of the grants is up to 80 percent, and the grants are awarded by the Transportation Department on a competitive basis using economic performance and expected ridership as indicators. The bill also authorizes grants to reduce congestion at rail "choke points" to increase reliability and avoid delays associated with congestion.